



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

## The Unemployable Poem

**Citation for published version:**

Rose, D 2010, *The Unemployable Poem*. La Traductiere.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Early version, also known as pre-print

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



## **The Unemployable Poem**

A poem is not a rabbit's foot, a comfort blanket, a keepsake.

It is not a cause, a religion, a key to the mystery of existence.

It is not a sedative, barbiturate, panacea, antidote.

It is not a recipe, a prescription, an implicitly good thing.

It is not a party membership or clubcard,

a secret handshake, an access code, a form of prayer.

It offers no guarantees, no reassurance or insurance regarding life, death  
or the crumbling rock to which we cling.

Though it may contain patterned phrases on the play of light on water,

the awesome majesty of mountains and loose ribbons of geese,

on the resemblance between swallows and fighter jets, herons and stylites,

though it may transform fear or frailty into cadences beautiful or sublime

though it may light up a dark day or draw the blinds on an abomination

this is not its job. A poem does not have a job. A poem is unemployable.

It is just a poem. Take it or leave it. Either way, it won't care.

Dilys Rose